

**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM
ENGINEERING CONSULTANT IMPLEMENTATION**

This document serves as the blueprint for the mechanics of the Mentor-Protégé Program (Program), the purpose of which has been set forth in a document titled Mentor-Protégé Program Guidelines (Guidelines). This Mentor-Protégé Program can only be used on non-federally funded engineering projects. The Protégé must be a certified DBE engineering firm prequalified in at least one category.

Enrollment in the Program

All parties wishing to participate in the Mentor-Protégé Program shall request the project be considered for the Mentor-Protégé Program to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) at or before the first negotiation meeting for the project. The request shall be accompanied by a work plan signed by both parties and submitted to IDOT's Bureau of Design and Environment. This Plan shall constitute the applicant's certification that its principal has received, reviewed and agreed to abide with the spirit and letter of all rules and Guidelines of the Program. IDOT will verify whether the applicant meets the Program's minimum qualifications for acting as either a Mentor or Protégé. Each party shall be notified in writing, within thirty (30) days of submission of its application (date of actual receipt by IDOT), whether it has been deemed eligible to participate in the Program. Once approved, the plan may be revoked by IDOT for cause as specified below.

Commencing the Mentor-Protégé Collaboration

All Mentor-Protégé collaborations will commence with the approval of the signed Mentor-Protégé Development Plan (Plan).

IDOT Oversight

IDOT oversight shall be conducted by a Committee, which will be the working arm of the Mentor-Protégé Program. The Committee shall consist of at least three IDOT personnel (one from the Office of Business and Workforce Diversity, the Program Development Engineer from the project's district office and the Bureau Chief of Design and Environment).

The parties shall submit quarterly progress reports indicating the status of their progress toward each of the Plan's stated goals. The reports will indicate the steps taken during the quarter to further the Plan. The reports shall also list all projects for which the Mentor has received (or applied for) DBE credit for using the Protégé as a DBE subconsultant.

The quarterly reports must be signed and dated by an authorized principal of each firm. The Mentor and Protégé shall each submit an annual report regarding the Program and accomplishments for the year. Both the Mentor and Protégé shall indicate in their reports the status of each goal outlined in the Plan, accomplishments, and how the Mentor specifically assisted the Protégé in reaching the stated goal/accomplishment.

Failure to timely submit reports, or submission of incomplete reports, is possible grounds for dissolution of Mentor-Protégé collaboration. If at any time the Committee determines that the Guidelines of the Program or the spirit thereof are not being adhered to by the parties or that satisfactory progress is not being made, IDOT reserves the right to revoke its approval of the Mentor-Protégé collaboration, thereby invalidating the Plan and/or any individual participant's enrollment in the Program.

Reasonable progress will be expected, though this will vary according to each Plan. A finding that the parties have failed to make reasonable progress toward goals stated in the Plan shall be communicated with the parties, in writing, within thirty (30) days of submission of the report. If one report (or failure to submit a report) indicates a failure to progress as expected, the parties shall be given written notice that the Mentor-Protégé collaboration is in jeopardy of being revoked and the underlying reasons. The parties shall be given an additional quarter to rectify their prior inaction or failure to progress. Two successive quarters deemed not to have yielded reasonable progress shall be grounds for revocation of the collaboration.

The Committee will annually evaluate the Mentor-Protégé collaboration using the following criteria:

- Satisfactory progress toward the stated goals of the Plan;
- Improved competency of the Protégé in specific aspects of highway engineering;
- Decreased reliance on the Mentor by the Protégé for technical knowledge, equipment, personnel; and,
- Increased numbers of projects in relation to number of advertised projects with consultants, other than the Mentor, and/or increased Statements of Interest submitted as a prime consultant.

Program participants agree that interpretation of the Guidelines or regulations shall rest with IDOT. Parties may feel free (and in fact are encouraged) to seek interpretation of any provision they find ambiguous or confusing. If both participants so desire, they may jointly appeal any adverse decisions to the Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation for reconsideration. These requests shall be in writing. The Secretary's determination shall be final.

DBE Goals and Administrative Costs

During the first scoping meeting, the Mentor shall indicate whether the Mentor will be using the Protégé as a subconsultant and to what extent. This will ensure that appropriate credit is given to the Mentor for that project's DBE goal. A fully-executed and approved Plan must be in place at the time of submission of the proposal package in order for a Mentor-Protégé collaboration to be recognized in connection with any particular project. All regulations must be adhered to in the use of the Protégé as a DBE subconsultant. A Mentor may have an approved collaboration with more than one Protégé at a time; goal reduction shall not be cumulative on any single project, no matter how many Protégés act as subconsultants on that project.

Hours may be added to the project specifically for mentoring the protégé. The number of hours along with the associated tasks shall be specifically delineated in the Plan.

Terminating the Mentor-Protégé Collaboration

Reasons for terminating the Mentor-Protégé collaboration are delineated herein and within the attached Guidelines. The Mentor-Protégé collaboration may be terminated by either party or the Committee. The Mentor-Protégé collaboration terminates at the completion of the project. IDOT shall notify both parties in writing of its intent to end the Mentor-Protégé collaboration. A Mentor-Protégé collaboration shall be deemed terminated effective on the date that written notification of the termination has been sent by any party or IDOT; this date shall be evidenced by postmark, date/time stamp of electronic mail, date of correspondence, etc. IDOT's decision to terminate a Mentor-Protégé collaboration is final.

Re-enrollment

Unless a participant is debarred from participation in the Program by IDOT, either party may remain enrolled in the Program following termination of a Plan due to expiration of the project.

Either party remains eligible to enter into a new Plan with a participant other than one with whom they have previously completed a Mentor-Protégé collaboration. One exception to this requirement: the parties may enter a Plan with a participant with whom they have previously had a Mentor-Protégé collaboration if the prior Plan was not terminated by IDOT for violation of these regulations.